

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

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THE GREEN HERON OF THE MALDIVES.

BY OUTRAM BANGS.

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Dr. Henry B. Bigelow, while with Mr. Agassiz on his expedition to the Maldives in 1901-1902, collected for the Museum a number of birds, among them one adult female Green Heron. This differs so much from any known species of *Butorides* that at first I hesitated to describe it, fearing it might be a "freak."

The species, however, is known to be resident and to breed in the Maldives and is said by Gadow and Gardiner,\* who refer it to *Butorides javanicus*, to occur in all the islands. Judging from the text, I infer that no specimens were secured by Gardiner, as no mention is made of any skin having been brought home.

On account of its very pallid coloring, the Green Heron of the Maldives may be known as—

***Butorides albidulus* sp. nov.**

*Type* from Suvadiva Atoll, southern Maldives, adult ♀, No. 39356, M. C. Z. Collected January 2, 1902, by Dr. Henry B. Bigelow.

*Characters*.—Size of *B. javanicus* (Horsf.); bill slightly heavier; colors all extremely pale, the crown with its occipital plumes, alone of the upper parts, dark metallic green; rump, upper tail coverts and tail grey, each rectrix deeply bordered all round with white; lower surface very pale grey; under tail coverts and lengthened neck plume, white; wing feathers very broadly edged with white, becoming pale buffy on lesser and middle coverts.

*Color*.—Crown and lengthened occipital plumes dark green; an ill-defined superciliary stripe, throat and fore neck, including lengthened plumes, that fall over chest, white, in places slightly washed but not regularly marked with buffy; sides of neck and body below pale silvery grey; cheeks grey washed with buffy; middle of belly and under tail

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\* Gardiner, Maldivic and Laccadive Archipelagoes; Aves, p. 369, 1903.

coverts dull greyish white; dorsal plumes pale grey, the longer lateral ones slightly greenish toward tips and edged basally with buffy; lower back, rump, upper tail coverts and tail dull grey; each rectrix bordered all round with white, the outer ones mostly white; remiges dull slate grey, each feather narrowly edged with white and white-tipped, except the four longest—outer most—primaries, on which the white tips are nearly obsolete; all the other wing feathers very deeply margined with whitish, becoming pale buffy on some of the middle and most of the lesser coverts.

*Measurements.*—Type, adult female, wing, 165 mm.; tail (feathers), 57 mm.; exposed culmen, 63 mm.; tarsus, 46 mm.

*Remarks.*—So far as general paleness of coloration is concerned the Green Heron of the Maldives is, without doubt, most nearly matched by *Butorides crawfordi* Nicoll of Assumption Island, and both species present the striking character of the tail feathers, all being deeply bordered with white. The latter species was probably, however, derived from *Butorides atricapillus* (Afzel.), whereas *Butorides albidulus* of the Maldives had its origin in *Butorides javanicus* (Horsf.), and the general likeness of the two species is probably due to their both living under similar conditions upon coral islands, and not to near relationship.

The new bird differs from *B. crawfordi*\* chiefly as follows: Crown green (not blue); underparts mostly pale grey, not (wholly “milky white”); no series of dusky spots along front neck; *tail* and *upper tail coverts* as well as rump grey (not green); wings with much wider pale borders to the feathers, these borders white on primaries and secondaries, buff on most of the smaller feathers.

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\*I of course have seen no skins of *B. crawfordi* and base what I say upon the description, Bull. B. O. C. Vol. XVI, p. 105, 1906, and the plate, *Ibis*, 1906.